



GREAT BASIN LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE
(Great Basin LCC)

Steering Committee Meeting Summary

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Organization/Agency	Member
The Nature Conservancy	Bob Unnasch, chair
Great Basin Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit	Maureen McCarthy, vice-chair
U.S. Geological Survey	Sue Phillips, past-chair
Bureau of Land Management	Raul Morales
California Department of Fish and Game	Armand Gonzales*
Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition	Julie Thompson
Friends of Nevada Wilderness	Larry Dwyer*
Great Basin Environmental Program	Stan Johnson
Great Basin Research and Management Partnership	Deb Finch
Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada	Bill Campbell
Nevada Department of Wildlife	Jennifer Newmark*
Northwest Climate Science Center	Gus Bisbal
Trout Unlimited	Helen Neville*
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Ted Koch
U.S. Forest Service	Bill Dunkelberger*
Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation	Heather Ray

*Attended via webinar

GREAT BASIN LCC STAFF AND FACILITATION TEAM

Rick Kearney, coordinator
 Todd Hopkins, science coordinator
 Matt Germino, research ecologist
 Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues
 Liz Mack, EnviroIssues
 Sarah Sanborn, EnviroIssues

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kevin Johnson, Southern Rockies LCC
 Larry Crist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Jay Martini, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Rob Campellone, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Karen Prentice, Bureau of Land Management
Elsa Haubold, LCC Network
Kit Muller, Bureau of Land Management
Paul Henson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Steven Zylstra, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Larry Rabin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Alan Clark, Utah DNR

WELCOME AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

Rick Kearney, Great Basin LCC Coordinator, welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. Bob Unnasch, Steering Committee chair, thanked everyone for joining the meeting and expressed his excitement at how much the Great Basin LCC has grown in the past year.

SYNOPSIS OF 2015 ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Rick provided an overview of the 2015 activities and accomplishments. He first described the Great Basin LCC's science productivity. The GBLCC was involved in a significant amount of science publications last year as well as supporting data collection and data synthesis. Next, Rick reviewed science engagement activities which included the Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool (FIAT) report and tools, invasive weed management report and strategy, climate change adaptation trainings, post-fire restoration science, regional science coordination, and work on ecological drought. Lastly, he provided an overview of activities that promoted the information exchange such as interviews, a productive outreach plan, social media, the webinar series, and numerous presentations.

NATIONAL ACADEMY REVIEW OF LCCS

Elsa Haubold, LCC Network coordinator, presented an overview of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) review of the LCCs. She started with a brief history of the LCCs and the LCC Network and then explained that the NAS was tasked with evaluating the purpose, goals, scientific merit and early successes of the LCCs. The NAS found that a landscape approach is needed for conservation and that the LCC approach is appropriate. The NAS also found that LCCs are unique; no other federal program is designed to address landscape needs at a national scale for all natural and cultural resources while bridging research and management. Elsa pointed out that it is too soon to evaluate the contributions of LCC science to conservation success on the ground.

The NAS recommended that the LCCs align performance metrics to the LCC Network strategic plan, improve the evaluation process to better capture the contributions made by all partners, improve collaboration and coordination with other landscape and habitat conservation efforts, and provide guidance on LCC-supported landscape conservation designs. The LCC Network has formed a team to establish next steps, create an action plan with partners, report on progress achieved and strive for continual improvement.

Maureen McCarthy asked if the LCC Network was engaged with the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) network and noted that the GBLCC and the CESU have great synergy and move funding more effectively for landscape scale work. Elsa was familiar with this.

Rick inquired about the interest of other agencies to operate at the landscape scale and asked if there are initiatives on the horizon that the GBLCC could be a part of. Maureen mentioned the partnership between California agencies and the U.S. Forest Service to do landscape scale restoration and stream management on the west shore of the Lake Tahoe basin. Deb Finch pointed out that the U.S. Forest Service has a collaborative forest landscape restoration program and that the LCCs could add a lot of value to that program. Todd Hopkins then provided a brief overview of the Northwest Basin and Range program. Todd also pointed to the sagebrush conference as an example of bringing people together across a landscape.

2016 STEERING COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Rick walked through the 2016 Steering Committee work plan and asked the committee if there was anything missing or anything that should be adjusted.

Ted Koch pointed to the recent work to address invasive species and fire and explained that this work is leading to a management paradigm shift. He asked if the GBLCC could help implement and organize the agencies and partners and help communicate this changing management approach.

Maureen asked Ted to clarify what he is looking for. Ted explained that it is both outreach and “in-reach”. They need to be able to communicate a simple consistent message. Maureen asked the group to differentiate between what agencies have to do as part of their communication plan and what the GBLCC can do as an independent organization. She recommends the GBLCC play the role of an honest broker and not advocate for a position.

Ted responded that many segments of society (such as citizens) are not exposed to the messages and it is challenging to help people understand major ecosystem threats. Larry Rabin pointed out the importance of effectively disseminating information and communicating in a variety of ways to ensure the results and products of the GBLCC have the maximum impact. Raul agreed that getting out information quickly and helping folks understand the work of the LCCs is a challenge.

Sue Phillips acknowledged that the GBLCC is well positioned to use the Request for Proposals (RFP) process to provide support to someone who can examine effective ways to spread the information. Deb added that this could be a pilot study for all of the LCCs.

Bill Campbell noted that the federal agencies could improve their communication with the public about how they are managing their land and pointed out that right now the only people getting publicity are the “Bundy types.” Ted agreed and noted that scientists and ranchers use very different language and agencies need to be able to communicate with both effectively.

Rick acknowledged that using resources to focus on communication would pull away resources from some of the other work of the GBLCC. Ted noted that he doesn't want to ask the GBLCC to reprioritize, but instead look for opportunities. Maureen stated that the federal agencies could come together and ask the GBLCC to facilitate a conversation with stakeholders.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Todd walked through the schedule for the RFP and explained the six activity areas. Stan Johnson asked if the GBLCC was planning to combine two years of funding to support larger projects. Todd explained that some funding was left over from previous cycles and that last year's funding has been held in a cooperative agreement. Stan encouraged the GBLCC to fund larger projects in order to address the critical landscape scale issues. Todd responded that more funding will probably be available next year or the following and this year the committee decided to focus on information synthesis. The group then discussed ways to leverage existing funding and align the RFP with other funding cycles.

GBLCC'S ROLE IN DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR'S INTEGRATED RANGELAND FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Recognizing the need to address rangeland fire on a large-scale, the Department of the Interior has issued a new Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy. Rick explained that the GBLCC has been assigned the lead or co-lead role in six of the related activities. The GBLCC is working with the Great Basin Fire Science Exchange to develop an online science information delivery system. The final piece is to work with partners on large scale demonstration projects on the control of cheatgrass. There will be several meetings at the sagebrush conference focused on this topic.

GBLCC'S ENGAGEMENT WITH TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Maureen showed a video about water scarcity on tribal land and explained that the messages from the video cross over to the work of the GBLCC. Rick asked the committee what the GBLCC could do to better engage with area tribes.

Heather noted that the large geographic scope of the Great Basin and the numerous amount of tribes makes this work challenging. The only way to effectively engage is to travel out to the tribes and visit them. That would require a tribal liaison or a full time staff member. She noted that the GBLCC could look at partnering with agencies who have tribal liaisons. Sue asked if the GBLCC would have the ability to identify information gaps and go out to a broad spectrum of experts to fund something and if that would work from a tribal perspective.

Bill Campbell gave an example of a poor interaction between a BLM staff member and a tribal member and pointed to the need for sensitivity training for different offices. He thinks that would help gain trust and avoid actions that harm relationship building. Raul noted that managers at the field level engage tribes regularly. The GBLCC could use this network to reach tribes.

Julie asked what kinds of questions the GBLCC would ask a tribal leader regarding their knowledge. Heather noted that interactions would not start with questions. Instead, they should start by developing a trusting relationship and familiarizing the tribe with what the LCC is doing. Todd explained how the GBLCC has worked with tribes through some of the funded traditional knowledge projects. The GBLCC does not ask for specifics of the traditional knowledge.

Maureen noted that the GBLCC could leverage existing projects as opposed to recreating their work. She said there is an opportunity to bring together projects that work with tribes to share their learnings and discuss how they can be most effective. Gus Bisbal noted that the Northwest Climate Science Center (CSC) is getting a tribal liaison and there might be an opportunity for that person to organize a traditional knowledge team or a gathering in the Great Basin. The CSC funded an assessment of climate readiness of tribes in the region and found that there are tribes that don't have their climate adaptation plans in process and often they are not sure how to start the process and lack the tools necessary.

At the last Native American Fish and Wildlife Professionals meeting there was a high level of interest in climate change and how it is impacting tribal values and resources of value. Rick will reach out to this group to see if there is an interest in working with the GBLCC.

DRAFT FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Penny Mabie provided an overview of the strategic planning working group and their timeline. She then presented an overview of the conservation community's engagement with the Public Forum. She reminded the committee of the Public Forum feedback document they were asked to review before the meeting. She asked if there were things heard from the Public Forum that should be incorporated into the strategic plan.

Ted noted that there was a strong emphasis on communication and identifying gaps in knowledge. Bob stated that the feedback showed a lack of understanding about the mission of the GBLCC, noting that many of the comments did not fit within the work of the GBLCC. This might point to a need to better communicate the work of the GBLCC.

Rick agreed with Bob and thought that people were reflecting their individual priorities and they don't understand the large scale focus of the LCC. He also noted that conservation is local and the GBLCC needs to provide context for those local conservation efforts and help those in the field see the bigger picture. Ted agreed, but noted that this is not a mistake on the part of those giving feedback, but instead a reflection of their local perspective and what they want the GBLCC to be to them.

Bob pointed out that it's hard to image how the GBLCC could bring down its work to a specific locality, especially with a small staff. The GBLCC can provide a place for people to come together and learn what others have done, but it cannot provide something for every location. This points to a need to better communicate the mission and work of the GBLCC.

Penny said that in the interest of time, this conversation will be referred to the working group and she asked the committee to suggest how they should measure the GBLCC's success.

Bill Campbell noted that Rick and Todd should consider sending out a video about the GBLCC to the tribes. He also invited Rick or Todd to present at one of his quarterly meetings with the tribal environmental managers. Penny noted that the number of tribes inviting the GBLCC to present could be a metric for the tribal engagement goal.

Maureen pointed out that although there are concrete things that can be measured, there is also work that the GBLCC does not directly control (such as effectively leveraging partnership) that still needs to be included. Rick added that there is a third aspect—the difference an effort makes.

Elsa noted that the LCC Network has a conservation delivery group that is focused on how to develop tools that are used and don't just sit on a shelf. Maureen noted that it would be helpful to hear from the LCC Network how they measure success. Steven Zylstra explained that you can look at what individual partners produce as a result of the LCC, but that you have to get that information directly from the partners.

Todd gave the example of the geospatial work the GBLCC did for the resistance and resilience report and how that led to the FIAT and those tools were adopted by the Forest Service and the BLM and now influences the management of over 20 million acres of land. Maureen asked if case studies would work as a measurement. Elsa responded that it is the role of the Steering Committee to decide what the GBLCC reports.

STEERING COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Non-governmental Organizations/Private Community Members

Rick presented the a list of Steering Committee members suggested through the Public Forum and asked the Steering Committee to provide feedback. Raul was interested in seeing one of the Cattlemen's Associations involved. Ted volunteered to help find a national or regional branch. Stan knew of some people in the organization who were very influential and volunteered his help.

Penny noted that some on the forum claimed that the eastern section of California was lacking representation and that some felt the GBLCC was very Nevada-centric. Bill Campbell suggested that the Inyo-Mono Watershed Management Group would represent that area.

Raul noted that the Public Lands Council could also represent cattle interests. Bill Campbell pointed out that backcountry horsemen could be instrumental in invasives work. Ted added that feral horses are also an enormous challenge.

Rick asked if the group would be comfortable making a decision today. Sue stated that she would like to see a list that includes more organization than those suggested at the forum. Rick said he would take this as an action item. Sue clarified that these seats should not remain vacant for another year.

Executive Leadership Team Transition

After this meeting Sue will end her time with the Executive Leadership Team, Maureen will become the new chair, Heather Ray will join as the vice-chair, and Bob will become the past chair. Rick thanked Sue for her commitment to the committee and presented her with a framed painting of the Black Rock Desert- High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area.

ACTION ITEMS

- **Todd** will investigate leveraging funding in coordination with the JFSP and others
- **Rick** will reach out to the Native American Fish and Wildlife group to see if there is an interest in working with the GBLCC
- **Penny** will reassemble the strategic planning working group
- **Rick** will investigate creating a video to present to tribal councils
- **Rick** will develop a longer list of possible NGOs for Steering Committee membership
- **Ted and Stan** will help find a good contact in the Cattlemen's Association
- **All** will provide feedback to Rick on the NGOs
- **All** will provide input to Penny on the strategic planning input from the Public Forum